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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000885

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/31/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IN SUNNI PROVINCES, NO MAJOR REACTIONS YET TO SOI  
ARREST IN BAGHDAD

REF: A. BAGHDAD 860

[B](#). BAGHDAD 628

[C](#). BAGHDAD 64

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Robert Ford for reasons 1.4  
(d)

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: The recent arrest of Sahwa/Sons of Iraq (Awakening/SOI) leader Adel Al Mashhadani and the subsequent violence in the Fadhil section of Baghdad has not yet raised strong concerns from other SOI leaders and members, or from other Sunni Arab leaders outside of Baghdad. In one hopeful development, the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) has received money to pay the SOIs. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (SBU) On Saturday, March 28, a joint ISF/CF operation arrested Adel Al Mashhadani, the SOI leader in the Fadhil district of central Baghdad, on terrorism charges. The operation, criticized as heavy-handed by Sunni Arab contacts otherwise unsympathetic to Mashhadani, prompted a violent reaction by Mashhadani's followers. Two Iraqis were killed and 11 wounded in the clashes between local SOI and ISF in Fadhil that followed the arrest.

#### SOI REACTIONS OUTSIDE OF BAGHDAD

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[3](#). (U) In Anbar province, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha, the head of the Iraq Awakening Conference (Muatammar Sahwa Al Iraq--MSI) political party reacted moderately to the arrest and subsequent violence in Al Fadhil. On the MSI website, Sheikh Ahmed called on the people of Al Fadhil "to abstain from the use of weapons to solve any problem, especially against the security forces, whose main duty is to protect the area," and wished for the return of normal life in Al Fadhil. MSI grew out of the Sahwasecurity movement in Anbar. NOTE: There is no known administrative or leadership link between the MSI or the Anbar Sahwa movement and other SOI or Sahwa councils throughout the rest of Iraq's provinces. Sheikh Ahmed is leader of the MSI political party only. END NOTE.

[4](#). (SBU) PRTs in Diyala and Salah Ad Din (SAD) provinces are reaching out to SOI and Sunni contacts but so far are finding few signs of reverberations from the March 28 arrest and violence in Baghdad's Al Fadhil neighborhood.

#### MOI OBTAINS FUNDING FOR SOI SALARIES

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[5](#). (C) We continue to hear from contacts that the GOI's delay in paying SOI members is causing unease and resentment among SOI members. The Ministry of Interior, though, has now confirmed that the Ministry of Finance has transferred over 30 billion Iraqi Dinars (roughly \$25 million) into the MOI's account. With this, MOI should be prepared to issue salaries which had been due in early March. SOI salaries will continue to pose significant budgetary and administrative challenges that will have to be dealt with on a month by

month basis.

COMMENT

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16. (C) Payment of salaries would help stop erosion of the GOI's credibility among Sunni Arab fighters. That credibility will take further hits however, if the Iraqi authorities make more high-profile arrests from among SOI ranks and do not explain clearly why they did so, and if GOI fails to make progress on promises to integrate the SOI into the ISF and Iraqi work force.

BUTENIS